

AMENDMENTS

In the Claims:

Please substitute the claims as indicated below for the claims of the same number.

Claims 1-19 have been currently amended (as shown later in this Amendment). All claims are included in this amendment. A marked-up version of all the currently amended claims per 37 CFR 1.121 is below.

1. (Currently Amended) An orthopedic device for reinforcing an anatomic joint of a body comprising:

at least one a superelastic membersupport comprising a unitary superelastic shape memory alloy consisting of at least one tightening link⁶⁵, and at least one spring link⁶³ extending from said tightening link;

a covering encapsulating said superelastic membersupport;

wherein said superelastic member comprises at least one tightening link that consists of a curved preshaped configuration in which said tightening link partially extends around and compresses against said body on one side of said anatomic joint; said tightening link enlarges in response to an external, expansion force for placement around said body and returns towards said preformed shape once said external, expansion force is removed; secures the orthopedic device to the body; and at least one

wherein said spring link comprising consists of an integrated flex region hinge located adjacent said anatomic joint; said spring link deflects at said hinge in response to an external, deflection force and returns to its resting shape upon removal of said external, deflection force that defines the motion of the anatomic joint;

2. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 1 wherein said spring link comprises consists of at least one loop at the flex region at said hinge that applies a first resistance when deflected in a first direction and a second resistance, different from the first, when deflected in a second direction;

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3. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 1 further comprising (a hinge stop) associated with said hinge of said spring link;

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wherein said hinge stop consists of a channel through which said superelastic support is placed and a protrusion that limits deflection of said hinge ~~that limits deflection of the flex region in a first direction and preserves deflection in a second direction different from the first direction;~~

4. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 1 wherein ~~the said device~~ superelastic support comprises ~~consists of two~~ a first tightening links located above said joint, a second tightening link located below said joint, interconnected with said a first spring link extending from said first and second tightening links, a second spring link extending from said first and second tightening links and intersecting said first spring link;

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wherein said device further comprises an interconnect means that secures said first spring link and said second spring link at said intersection ~~such that the spring link limits the angular rotation of said tightening links relative to each other;~~

5. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 1 wherein said tightening link is ~~deflected, with an external force, into an enlarged configuration for placement and returns towards its resting configuration once the external force is removed~~ compresses against said body as said spring link is deflected;

6. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 1 wherein ~~said tightening link incorporates~~ further comprising a locking mechanism attached to ⁹⁶ (opposing sides) ^{ante-} of said tightening link;

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(^{funct -} wherein engagement of said locking mechanism ~~to removably secure~~ prevents enlargement of the said tightening link to the body;)

7. (Currently Amended) An orthopedic device for limiting directing the motion of an anatomic joint of a body comprising:

at least ~~one~~ a ~~superelastic member support comprising~~ comprising a unitary superelastic shape memory alloy consisting of at least two tightening links, one a first tightening link located on each side of the ~~above said~~ anatomic joint, a second tightening link located below said

anatomic joint, and at least two a first spring links extending from and connecting the said first and second tightening links on a first side of said anatomic joint, and a second spring link extending from and connecting said first and second tightening links on a second side different than said first side;

wherein each said first and second tightening links are curved such that they partially extend around and compress against said body and each

wherein said first and second spring links is adapted to deflect from a first, resting configurations to a second, stressed configurations different from said first configurations in response to an external force, and return towards said first configurations upon reduction or removal of said external force;

8. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 7 wherein said first and second spring links intersect at an intersecting region; and

said device further comprising comprises at least one an interconnect mechanism securing said intersecting regions together of said spring links;

9. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 7 further comprising at least one locking mechanism associated with at least one of attached to the sides of said first and second tightening links;

(wherein actuation of said locking mechanism removably secures prevents enlargement of said tightening link to said body;)

10. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 7 wherein at least one of said spring links further comprises at least one hinge stop associated with said first or second spring link hinge mechanism adapted to limit motion of the joint in a first direction and preserve motion of the joint in a second direction different from the first direction;

11. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 7 wherein at least one of said spring links is adapted to provide resistance to motion of the anatomy about the joint said tightening links compress against said body as said spring links are deflected;

12. (Currently Amended) An orthopedic device for applying decompression to an anatomic structure of a body comprising:

at least one superelastic ~~member support~~ comprising a unitary superelastic shape memory alloy consisting of at least two⁶³ a first tightening links comprising a first side, a second side, and a curved preformed configuration between said first and second sides, a second tightening link comprising a first side, a second side, and a curved preformed configuration between said first and second sides,⁶³ and at least one spring link extending from and connecting the said first and second tightening links;

~~and adapted to apply an outward force against the tightening links;~~

at least one locking mechanism ⁹⁶ ~~adapted to secure the~~ attached to said first and second tightening links; to the anatomic structure wherein said locking mechanism secures said first sides and said second sides together; and

at least one ~~decompression mechanism~~⁸³ stiffening means associated with ~~connected to said spring link;~~ ⁸³ wherein actuation of said stiffening means deflects said spring link from its preformed configuration to a stressed configuration different from said preformed configuration to define the magnitude and the direction of the outward force exerted by said spring link;

13. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 12 wherein said ~~tightening links are~~⁶⁵ integrated with said spring links first tightening link has a radius of curvature different from said second tightening link;

14. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 12 wherein said spring links ~~are adapted to also apply a directional force against the anatomic structure~~ consists of a loop;

15. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 12 wherein a plurality of spring links extend from and connect said first and second tightening links, and said ~~decompression stiffening means mechanism is adapted to adjust~~ the lateral separation of said spring links to alter said outward force;